

Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan

Workshop #1 Summary

August 2016

Introduction

Workshop #1 for the DVSPE was held Saturday, August 27, 2016. An estimated 82 participants attended. Five stations related to the following topics were set up:

- (1) Neighborhoods and Vision
- (2) Land Use and Density
- (3) Mobility
- (4) Urban Design and Arts
- (5) Business and Economic Development.

Each station had a corresponding worksheet that could be submitted to staff through September 15, 2016. In addition, an online community survey and online business survey were available, as well. The following table summarizes the worksheets and responses received to date:

Table 1: Workshop #1 Response Summary

Topic	Number of Worksheets Received
Neighborhoods and Vision	26
Land Use and Density	25
Mobility	28
Urban Design and Arts	27
Business and Economic Development	23
General Comments	9
Total	138
Number of Unique Commenters (includes worksheets and emails; assumes worksheets with no names are from unique individuals)	73
Online Community Survey Respondents	156
Online Business Survey Respondents	9

Executive Summary

Generally, consensus attendees were open to two to five story buildings in the downtown, but wanted to retain the City's small town feel. The cleanliness and perception/presence of homeless/transients, crime and criminal activity was the largest deterrent to community members spending more time downtown. There was community concern regarding new affordable housing developments and a preference to see market rate housing. There was also community concern regarding reductions in parking and potentially increasing traffic. More family oriented and professional type businesses were highly desired (e.g., restaurants, breweries, brewpubs, movie theatres, etc.). Generally, attendees were open to office and hotel type uses. Having a larger mix of businesses was also desired. Allowing for art and providing an art district was generally well supported. Creating a more walkable downtown with more trees/shade and seating/plaza areas was a high priority. Additional park and parklet areas were desired.

The sections below summarize common themes, possible areas of community concern, and unique ideas from worksheets that can direct the next steps of the planning process for the DVSPE. Separate summaries will be provided for the online community and business surveys.

Neighborhoods and Vision (26 worksheets)

- The community expressed support for several components of the existing vision for the Downtown Village Specific Plan, which include:
 - A vibrant and sustainable downtown;
 - Employment opportunities;
 - Shopping in a village atmosphere;
 - Shared community spaces and mixed-use; and
 - Building on the unique character of Lemon Grove.
- Participants would like to include the following modifications to the existing vision:
 - A pedestrian-oriented environment;
 - Access to public and cultural events; and
 - A family-oriented environment.
- The participants ranked the goals for Downtown Lemon Grove accordingly:

Goal	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
1: Create a vibrant downtown district that is visually attractive and compatible with the village atmosphere of the current downtown Lemon Grove.	100%	0%	0%
2: Create a pedestrian friendly environment.	96%	4%	0%
3: Encourage transit-oriented development to create comfortable, walkable neighborhoods centered around a safe and attractive transit station serving multi-modal transportation. There are opportunities for changes in densities and implementation of smart growth development ideals to create a concentrated downtown core, and utilize transit oriented development	84%	8%	8%

principles.			
4: Obtain a parking supply that is balanced to support the viability of commercial district businesses while minimizing impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.	92%	4%	4%
5: Create a long term, sustainable business environment for business and property owners.	83%	17%	0%
6: Obtain a level of mobility (walking, bicycles, transit and auto) that furthers economic development, convenience, safety and choice for residents, visitors, and the business community.	84%	12%	4%
7: Encourage sustainable development, meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In addition, promote green building design, which includes for example energy efficient design and renewable, nonpolluting materials.	96%	4%	0%

- A participant had concerns regarding the transit-oriented development aspect of the existing Downtown Village Specific Plan vision, as he/she believes that the development would attract transients. Another participant was concerned about being too urban.
- A participant commented that the vision is too broad and generalized.
- Suggestions for new/additional goals include:
 - Emphasize unique personality of the area; and
 - Make better use of the historical surrounding to increase attractiveness of the community.

Land Use and Density (25 worksheets)

- When asked about favorite places in the study area, respondents cited the following areas:
 - Coriander Deli;
 - Civic Park, Trolley Park;
 - Food 4 Less;
 - Goodwill;
 - GTM;
 - JoAnn's;
 - Library;
 - Sprouts;
 - Starbucks;
 - Skate park;
 - The Home Depot;
 - Walgreens;
 - The Broadway corridor east of Lemon Grove Ave.; and
 - The new development by the Lemon Grove Depot.
 - Several respondents stated that they did not have any favorite places within the study area.

- Participants cited a need for more businesses and retail options in the Downtown area oriented towards recreation and leisure. Ideas mostly included suggestions for commercial uses, such as:
 - More restaurants;
 - Hotels; and
 - Organic farmer's market.
- Other recreational ideas also included a need for more open space uses, such as:
 - An open concert area;
 - Parklets, parks and plazas; and
 - A community garden (in front of Bank of America, or farmers market).
- Some respondents indicated that the following uses were missing from the study area: Mixed use, studio and one bedroom apartments, office space, and tech industry/services.
- There was also a suggestion to include light industrial in the project area for machine shops.
- The increase of housing density was a concern for the participants as there is traffic congestion and limited parking.
- According to the survey, the participants mostly prefer a 2-3 story building height for the area with articulation. Up to five seemed acceptable to many of the participants, but largely because they wanted to retain the small town feel.
- Having a historic district and a historic preservation ordinance was also emphasized.

Mobility (28 worksheets)

- The majority of the questionnaires identified both Lemon Grove Avenue and Broadway as the most frequently used streets in the study area. The second-most frequently used streets identified were School Lane and Massachusetts Avenue.
- Participants also identified the following streets the community uses most:
 - Buena Vista Ave.;
 - Central Ave.;
 - Golden Ave.;
 - Grove St.;
 - Kempf St.;
 - Lemon Ave.;
 - Lemon Grove Way;
 - Lester Ave.;
 - Lincoln St.;
 - Main St.;
 - New Jersey Ave.;
 - North Ave.;
 - Olive St.;
 - Palm St.;
 - Vista Ave.; and
 - Washington St.

- Participants noted the following areas and intersections they would like to see improvements to travel by walking:
 - Broadway/Lemon Grove was the focus for intersection improvements
 - Acacia St.;
 - Buena Vista Ave.;
 - Golden Ave.;
 - Lemon Ave.;
 - Broadway and Kempf St.;
 - Broadway and Massachusetts Ave.;
 - Broadway east of Lemon Grove Ave. ;
 - Central Ave. and Lemon Grove Ave.;
 - Full length of Lemon Grove Ave.;
 - Buena Vista Ave. and Olive St.; and
 - Golden Ave. from School Lane to Kempf St.
- Participants noted the following areas and intersections they would like to see improvements to travel by biking:
 - Broadway;
 - Central Ave.;
 - Lemon Grove Ave.;
 - Broadway and Kempf St.;
 - Broadway and Lemon Grove Ave.;
 - Broadway and Massachusetts Ave.;
 - Broadway and New Jersey Ave.;
 - Buena Vista Ave. and Olive St.; and
 - Central Ave. and Lemon Grove Ave.;
- Participants noted the following areas and intersections they would like to see improvements to travel by car:
 - Broadway;
 - Lester St.;
 - Broadway and Lemon Grove Ave.;
 - Broadway and Kempf St.;
 - Broadway and Lemon Grove Ave.; and
 - Broadway and Massachusetts Ave.
- Suggestions for physical improvements around the Lemon Grove Trolley Depot and/or bus stops include:
 - General trash clean up, fresh paint, and power washing ground surfaces;
 - Addressing the homeless population;
 - Adding peripheral parking with solar PV covers and electric car charging;
 - Altering traffic flow of downtown to Massachusetts Ave. by making it car-free;
 - Better integration of “kiss and ride” to promenade;
 - Constructing a pedestrian overpass at Lemon Grove Depot;

- Constructing a parking structure for Trolley commuters;
- Constructing a playground;
- Constructing a police/sheriff sub-station or adding security guards or sheriff deputies;
- Integrating all public transit modes into one transit station;
- Improving signage and business aesthetics;
- Moving the bus stop next to Trolley station;
- More plants and shade trees and/or structures;
- More lighting;
- More street amenities (e.g., benches and trash cans); and
- Removing smoke shops and pay day loan establishments.
- In addition, the community provided suggestions for improving the intersections for pedestrians, cyclists, and automobile drivers. Those suggestions include:
 - Pedestrian mobility:
 - Include more trees with large canopies, better lighting, and safety call boxes; and
 - Include more sidewalks and a pedestrian bridge that connects the Trolley stop to the bus stop.
 - Include better sidewalk paving with more creative materials and patterns.
 - Bicycle mobility:
 - Clearly defined and protected bike lanes; and
 - Route cyclists to side streets.
 - Automobile mobility:
 - Slow down traffic on Lemon Grove Ave.;
 - Keep traffic moving;
 - Change Washington between Broadway and Golden Ave. back to two-way traffic;
 - Restrict single-family lots to two cars;
 - Restrict motor home and commercial truck parking on city streets
 - Close Broadway between Grove and Lemon Grove Ave.;
 - Close the Downtown Corridor to Massachusetts Ave. and provide parking on the periphery; and
 - Affix a 'no right-turn' signal to the existing traffic signal at Lemon Grove Ave. and Broadway.
- According to the survey, participants cited the following as the three treatments they are most interested in improving walkability along Broadway:
 - More landscaping (approx. 88%);
 - Expanded sidewalks (approx. 73%); and
 - Site amenities (e.g., benches, trash receptacles, etc.) (approx. 69%).
- Other ideas for the Broadway corridor include:
 - Endowing site amenities by soliciting donations;

- Adding more seating, tables, and rubbish bins;
- Creating a plaza;
- Enforcing noise and emission rules for bicycles and motorcycles;
- Using xeriscape landscaping techniques;
- Preserving the historic landmarks and foliage;
- Removing medians;
- Narrowing the streets;
- Street closures for park and retail active spaces;
- One-way streets;
- More art;
- Re-striping the pavement;
- Synchronizing the street lights to the Trolley; and
- Improving traffic flow.

Urban Design and Arts (27 worksheets)

- Most of the community would like a simple, uniform, recognizable design throughout the Broadway corridor with public art, murals, landscaping, and gateway monuments. Others prefer the eclectic and unique design of the existing buildings as opposed to a uniform design throughout. Statues and private art seemed well supported. Providing incentives to local artists was also prioritized by some.
- Some members of the community would prefer to continue the lemon theme; however, others are opposed. Those opposed have suggested that the lemon theme is overused, while those in favor believe the theme is part of the Lemon Grove character.
- A participant suggested the continuation of the Art Deco style. Another participant suggested mid-western village architectural and 1950s style architectural.
- Specific suggestions for public art include:
 - Freestanding statues;
 - Functional public art;
 - Gateway sign that arches across Broadway and Lemon Grove near the Trolley stop;
 - Landscape art;
 - Murals;
 - Incorporating local artists' work;
 - Painted electrical boxes; and
 - Signage, as illustrated in the mobility survey.
- The community likes the character of the project areas, including the residential and commercial history. The public library, diversity of existing buildings, and murals are also valued.
- The community also prefers aesthetically pleasing colors.
- Participants also expressed interest in amenities such as bike corrals, water stations, and street furniture.
- A participant suggested giving taggers a large billboard so they do not spray graffiti on the walls.

Business and Economic Development (23 worksheets)

- The biggest attractions to shopping in Downtown that participants cited include:
 - Available parking;
 - Proximity and freeway access to San Diego and La Mesa;
 - Trolley access; and
 - Walkability.
- Participants noted the following deterrents to shopping in Downtown:
 - Cleanliness (most emphasized);
 - Homeless/vagrancy issues (most emphasized);
 - Area is too auto-centric;
 - Building façade aesthetics;
 - Noise;
 - Pan-handling;
 - People advertising their religion or politics;
 - Security;
 - Parking;
 - Lack of central communal area, such as a park;
 - Distance between businesses;
 - Quality of businesses (e.g., specific comments about too many smoke shops, auto repair and pay day loan establishments);
 - Variety of businesses; and
 - Walkability.
- Participants provided the following suggestions to improve Downtown businesses:
 - Improve front/rear business facades;
 - More lighting;
 - More trees with large canopies;
 - More shaded seating areas;
 - More recreation with outdoor seating areas and parklets;
 - More local businesses;
 - Bring in the prefabricated or modular house industry as a source of employment;
 - Bring in a chain restaurant to anchor the businesses;
 - Outdoor restaurants;
 - More trendy restaurants, wine bars, and micro-brew pubs;
 - Businesses that cater to nightlife;
 - Movie theater;
 - Create a plan for new businesses and land owners or get landowners to improve buildings;
 - Live/work lofts, market rate condos, townhomes, etc.;
 - Constructing a parking lot on Golden Ave. between Kempf and LG Ave. (with trees for shade);
 - Move parking behind stores;

- Provide public restrooms at parks;
- Provide gateway signs over streets as you enter downtown;
- Varying ideas on types of businesses, but generally encouraged family oriented businesses;
- Create an art district and incorporate more art into the downtown;
- Close Broadway to cars between Grove and LG Ave.;
- Reconfigure Broadway;
- Make the big lemon a centerpiece of a pedestrian area;
- Create protected bike/ped paths;
- Create a walking path to connect businesses in 2-3 block area instead of spreading businesses along 2 miles;
- Increase in law enforcement presence;
- Food co-op, tea house for weekly community mtgs.;
- Healthy food options;
- Shopping cart borrowing system;
- City involvement in reducing unemployment;
- Youth center or sports park;
- More street amenities like benches, seating areas, trash receptacles, etc.
- Create sustainable buildings with renewable energy (e.g., solar panels);
- Large tent for winter shelter where homeless and migrants can obtain resources and information; and
- Installing modern-looking trashcans.
- In general, participants expressed a desire for a greater variety of businesses, especially retail options and restaurants. They voiced a desire to spend locally, but felt that the current mix of businesses in the DVSPE study area did not adequately serve their needs and instead spent their dollars in areas such as North Park, Little Italy, and Downtown La Mesa.

General Comments (9 worksheets)

- There is a desire to see more public space, parks, and a plaza where people can spend their recreation time.
- A participant suggested removing commercial zoning from Lemon Gove Ave. or removing residential zoning, as he/she believes that mixed-use is a poor use of zoning powers.
- The idea of a scavenger hunt-theme for public art was also suggested where art throughout the city can be found with a map or through social media.
- There were also concerns regarding the variety of businesses and healthy food options as there are undesirable businesses, such as smoke shops, pay day loans, liquor stores and tattoo parlors, auto repair businesses and too many fast food restaurants.
- A participant also suggested that the Lemon Grove Bakery historical building could be turned into a food cooperative and teahouse for community meetings.

- A community member suggested that the City should construct a community swimming pool (indoor and outdoor).A community member suggested researching the National Main Street Center for preserving parts of Downtown and/or making improvements.
- Another community member emphasized the need for a strong employer(s) in the study area that can provide stable employment at a living wage; they cited the prefabricated or modular house business as an example. They also emphasized the need for jobs-housing balance in the study area to reasonably facilitate bike-to-work and walk-to-work trips.